

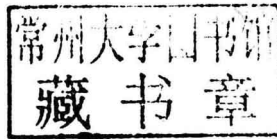


An Introduction to Landscape

Peter J. Howard

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ASHGATE

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AN INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE

Preface

'Knowledge transfer' is now a key phrase in academic circles in the UK. People have become aware, at long last, of the gap between the research carried out in universities – and even the teaching there – and the thinking of much of the people. Scientists have largely failed to convince people of the realities of climate change and this has been a wake-up call in many disciplines. In landscape there has long been effective transfer of knowledge between many university disciplines and the people who work in various government departments managing the landscape. But new undergraduates, and the millions of people concerned for their places, are often unaware of recent thinking. Most are probably unaware that there is now a European Landscape Convention enshrined in UK law. This textbook is for them.

It arose when I was asked if I would write a follow-up to a previous textbook concerned with heritage, but my primary concern had long been rather more specifically involved with landscape, and the publishers allowed me the privilege of writing to my obsession. My thanks to Val Rose for her support throughout.

Landscape became the central feature of my thinking when I became the first geographer to be employed in a school of art, but it had long had a hold on me. Travelling always meant looking out of the window, waiting for the change in the geology. Soon I discovered the Landscape Research Group, which has been my academic home for nearly 40 years, 10 of them spent editing their journal *Landscape Research*. My thanks to my many colleagues in the group, coming with a whole variety of perspectives – to Jay Appleton, David Lowenthal, David Coleman, Jacqueline Burgess, Kenneth Olwig and Ian Thompson, among many others. I have learned much from them and from my students and my wife and family, who would keep asking questions which made me think again. No doubt they would all take issue with some of the ideas in this book, but the blame is clearly down to me alone.

The group was also responsible for my closeness to the making and application of the European Landscape Convention. As the International Officer I was the one who was the 'observer' at so many meetings and workshops, and the development of my contacts all over Europe has stemmed

from that interest. For readers from other continents I must admit that the attitudes to landscape here expressed are very Eurocentric, and there are certainly major differences in other parts of the world. If the book makes you consider those differences, I rest content.

British readers will also notice that the examples cited here are very often from my own landscapes in the south-west of England, and especially Devon, where I have lived for 40 years, still with much of my family close by. If this remains as a constant reminder, perhaps even an irritant, that landscape as now defined is deeply personal, then that is also the intention. A visiting lecturer from the National Trust said of my students that they didn't know all the answers, but they certainly knew all the questions. I could ask no more. If, at the end, the reader knows the questions, then that will be quite sufficient.

Peter Howard
Winkleigh, 2011

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Introduction

alteration: 改良; 改造.

discipline: 学科

Those who need to read this textbook on landscape will not fit easily into even a few categories. Many may be students, but their main subject might be one of many; others may be involved in one of the many battles concerning landscape alterations that are under way in courts and inquiries in most countries. Others may hope to discover more about places they love, or even some advice on designing and planting their garden. Some of these will be disappointed, especially the last, as the author's aim is that you should learn more about yourself, and hence about your attitude to landscape. I cannot even promise that you will learn what 'landscape' is, although you will be given some of the arguments and elements that might allow you to answer that question for yourself. At the very beginning we cannot assume very much more than 'landscape is out of doors' so if I want to look at a landscape I must go to the window, and there it is. However, immediately we can discover that some places are more landscape than others. The view from my back window looks out across fields to Dartmoor in the distance (Figure 1.1), and this is much more 'landscape' than the view from my front window to the road and the garage next door (Figure 1.2). As for the 'outdoors', even that might be questioned as I am surrounded by paintings and photographs of places, and these are certainly called landscapes.

No wonder that landscape is still not quite a respectable academic subject if we still remain so unsure as to what it might be. No doubt if it had become the intellectual property of a single discipline it would by now have been defined so carefully as to miss all the richness of the present confusion, and it would have been so imbued with abstractions as to be safely removed from the daily conversation of non-specialists. Perhaps that process is already well under way; sadly, some may consider this book to be contributory to that process. True, there are departments of Landscape Architecture or Landscape Design, and there are modules concerning landscape in several other disciplines, including geography, ecology, archaeology and art history. Sometimes they seem to be talking about quite different things, and these differences, and the difficulties of definition, are the principal discussion of Part 1 of this book. But in most of these disciplines landscape is still rather peripheral, and people

{ modern
modul.

definition: 定义; 解说; 精确度; 清晰度.



1.1 Mid-Devon landscape. View from the back of the author's house. Proper landscape?

studying landscape more often find their allegiances with others in other departments. There is, I suggest, a very simple reason for this. Landscape is not very rational. It is intensely personal and reflects our own history, our own nationality and culture, our personal likes and dislikes. It is always about 'my place', or at least somebody's place. The official definition by the European Landscape Convention (also known as the Florence Convention after the city where it was signed), to which we shall return again and again in this book, is 'an area of land as perceived by people', and inevitably that means 'an area of land as perceived by me'. So the whole of this first part of the book has elements of autobiography, and the first person is used quite frequently. This is entirely consistent with the plan of constantly underlining that rational judgements of landscape quality are always overlaid, usually buried, by personal preference. So it is no part of this book's remit to change your mind as to what constitutes a good landscape or a bad one, though I spend some time asking you why you like what you like.

Landscape is immensely popular; meetings to discuss the landscape impact of some local planning proposal attract large numbers, and they are vocal and defensive. The landscape is indeed the Nimby's playground. (Nimby is one of those useful acronyms; it means 'Not In My Back Yard' – a position many of us find ourselves in when confronted by new developments.) Very few people welcome change, even to what appear to most outsiders' eyes to be very drear places indeed. This popularity of landscape is not limited to Britain – the existence of a European Convention is proof enough – but Britain has played a particular role in the history of landscape. There are strong arguments for supposing, as we shall see, that an important strand of the 'landscape concept', the idea of landscape as distinct from 'land', was largely an aristocratic invention in Britain, most specifically England, and that it was then learned and acquired by others who also changed the idea itself (Olwig, 2002). To a veneer of intellectual conceit were added emotional and visceral meanings that have brought the current obsession with landscape almost to the point where it hardly differs from the much more mundane idea of 'place'.

This concept of 'place' is very clearly understood by most local people; almost all local events can be filed under 'who' or 'where' or 'when' or all of those three. It is the journalist's basic creed – you never get this wrong ... though they do. Place is the 'where' category. There may be a local history



society, but the members are usually equally happy dealing with biological material as historical (natural history), or archaeological, or agricultural, or genealogical – provided it is still about ‘our place’. Academics divide the world of knowledge into much more sophisticated categories of disciplines, but after years of argument and debate they have agreed on a definition of ‘landscape’ that looks remarkably like the local idea of ‘place’ – an area perceived by people, and therefore containing not only their works but also their memories.

The emotional nature of landscape needs to be kept clearly in view throughout the first part of this book, which tries to follow some of the threads of ideas about landscape that have been the subject of academic concern. The definition by the European Landscape Convention (signed in Florence in 2000) is taken as being the final destination of all these threads, although of course that is unlikely to be true: first because it is only European countries that have agreed upon it, though there are now rumours of a World Convention; and second because no academic debate is ever agreed upon so completely. Many disciplines and discussions on landscape occur without any reference to this definition at all. However, by the end of Part 1 you should have a good idea of the different undercurrents that swirl about the concept of landscape and how the idea has conceived.

Part 2 can, therefore, concentrate on the present and examine the phenomenon of landscape itself. In some ways this is even more difficult. If landscape is a ‘place perceived by people’ then there are two obvious ways to describe it – either describe the places or describe the people doing the

1.2 Street scene. View from the front of the author’s house. Is this landscape?

perceiving. The first of these is by far the most common, and most books on landscape will take either a chronological structure (how did the place come to look like this?) or a typological one (moorlands, woodlands, farmland, industry perhaps). Here I prefer to concentrate on the people and their perceptions, on the meanings that landscape evokes in a wide variety of people. The early chapters, therefore, first consider whether there are any perceptions, or landscape meanings, common to all people, while subsequent chapters examine the factors that might significantly alter these meanings to individuals or groups, from nationalism to local defensiveness, from the pastoral to the 'other-worldly'. There are a series of capsules connected with this section which apply this understanding to types of landscape to help you apply the broader ideas, but the 'landscape history' offered here will be 'perceptual history'. How Dartmoor, for example, was made and came to be as it is has been the subject of much work (Mercer, 2009), but how it has been perceived is scarcely discussed. This book is the other way round; the emphasis is clearly on the factors influencing the perception, but you will find little detail about the history of hedgerows or field patterns, or about the ecological history of ancient woodlands or of changes in farming practice. There is no doubt much work still to be done in those fields, but excellent introductions are already available (Hoskins, 1955; Rackham, 1986).

By the end of Part 2 you should know something of how the landscape idea came to be, what it is and what landscape means to a whole variety of people. One lesson will be fundamental, that all landscapes are of deep significance to someone, so that altering any place will always concern someone. Nevertheless landscapes are never static, and Part 3 therefore must look to the future landscapes of a fast-changing world. It does this by referring back to the Convention, which states that some landscapes will need protection, some management and some enhancement. In fact, of course, most landscapes will require all three, and how one can protect without managing is a useful question. But it makes a valuable structure, and the protective measures are essentially either those of designation of the special, which has been widely used at every level of government and international agency, or the Convention's idea of ensuring that all landscapes are treated as special, though different. That leaves the issues of managing landscapes by other methods, and of enhancing them – the latter being the role of landscape architects in particular. In all of this it is vital to remember that only very few landscapes can be managed for landscape values alone (whatever they might be). Even British National Parks have important other roles, such as encouraging access. Landscapes are not museum artefacts – they have to be lived in and have to produce the food, drink and the oxygen for the world's fast-increasing population. This leads to the final chapter of trends and issues concerning the sustainable landscape in the face of climate change, food demands and other major developments. Is there a way in which we can possibly love our future landscapes (with all the mental, spiritual and physical health benefits this brings) without completely compromising the

ability of the world's fast-increasing population, of humans but also of other species of both animal and plant, to survive?

Next time you are out in the street you will probably find a once-white van with 'Landscape' or 'Landscaping' on the side. It will mean 'gardening' or possibly 'tree-planting'. That use of the word is not discussed in this book, although it does remind us that landscapes are manufactured by people. While we are writing and reading about the concept of landscape there will be people out there planting the trees and laying out the grounds which just might be a significant part of the solution to the problem of loving the future. Some of them will also be deeply concerned that this future will be sustainable and are well aware that their trade has important responsibilities to make it so.¹

Before setting forth, there are three elements of the book that require a little explanation. Because landscape is such a confusion of ideas, there are elements which just will not fit into the structure laid down, and these are treated as separate little essays or 'capsules', scattered not quite randomly throughout. I owe the idea to Norman Davies in his *History of Europe*. There are two types: there are capsules concerning methods and sources; and, especially in Part 2, there are others, sometimes quite long, that apply the perceptions and meanings discussed in the main text to specific landscape types such as heathland or villages.

There are also exercises throughout, and you may be surprised at the nature of some of these. While a few may resemble examination questions, and will involve some further reading, the majority are simply intended to stimulate thought and relate the matter in the book to people's own experience, and especially to landscapes with which they are familiar. This reinforces the conviction that landscape is a deeply emotional subject and cannot be understood as an abstraction or a lump of knowledge that remains within the covers of a book. It has to relate to real places, to real times and, above all, to real people. Similarly the pictures and the case studies mentioned will closely reflect landscapes well known to me; you will need to translate these into examples known to you. The fact that I live in south-west England will be very obvious from the start, and the illustrations will probably reflect my travels, largely within Europe. Consequently the book does not attempt to give answers that are relevant to all the landscapes around the globe; it does, however, attempt to ask questions that are appropriate everywhere and to which readers might attempt a local solution. If you find yourself saying 'It isn't like that around here!' then the book has achieved its aim, and you may have just found the subject for an essay.

Some readers might be shocked by the paucity of references cited here. This is quite deliberate, but it is also intended that the summation of all the references should constitute a reading list including the most significant works with which every student of landscape should be reasonably familiar. It does not include works of local importance; nor do I feel the need to justify every sentence throughout the book with a reference in order to prove that nothing written is new, as is the modern way with works of scholarship. Many of